

SPRING 2017

BRIDGE

A PUBLICATION FOR OUR FRIENDS FROM PATHWAYS OF HOPE



Grappling With Guilt page 17

Grief Notes

2017 Spring Greetings!

Lisa Balster, MA, MBA, LSW

Director of Care: Patient and Family Support Services

Most of us look forward to the Spring, when we can once again enjoy warm weather, longer days with more sunshine, and many outdoor activities that bring us happiness. There is new life all around, growing and thriving, each day a little bit different. In our grief, we find hope in this season, understanding that it teaches us about rebirth, new life, and new beginnings.



In the Spring edition of the *Bridge*, you will find a variety of information that promises to be interesting and helpful to you and your loved ones. You will find articles on coping with grief as an adult child with a bereaved parent, loss of a child, and an article that addresses the emotion of guilt. There are also several support group offerings, including memorial services, special teas, and luncheons that provide an opportunity to gather together to honor and remember a loved one. Information about Camps and the unique and effective activities that the camp experience offers children and teens is included here. Finally, there is a section on “remembering” - leaning into our memories can be encouraged as a healthy way to cope with loss.

Pathways of Hope continues to provide supportive counseling and education for individuals, families, and groups in our communities at no cost to our clients. Please see our listing of locations on page____. Your health and well-being are important to us, and we look forward to speaking with you to determine which services are right for you.



Table of Contents

Grief Notes 2

Grief FAQ’s 4

Ohio’s Community Mercy Hospice Time of Remembrance5

Time of Remembrance5

Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center..... 6

Book Reviews 8

Community Care Hospice Slates Memorial
Service.....9

Memorial Butterfly Release 9

The Pathways of Hope Bereavement Counseling
Professionals Team10

Sandwiched Between Your Own Grief and the Grief of
Your Surviving Parent 12

Remembering.....14

Grappling with Guilt 17

Camp Courageous offers Support and Education for
Grieving Children/Teens18

A Milestone in Mending Broken Hearts..... 19



Grief FAQ's:

Frequently Asked Questions about Grief

I am having trouble sleeping. Is this normal?

Simply put, grief counseling consists of a confidential, guided conversation about your loss experience with a trained counseling professional. It is different than a social conversation in both its structure and purpose. The process involves telling your story and describing the problems or dilemmas associated with your loss. Your counselor will likely ask questions that will help him or her get a better understanding of your situation, concerns, and goals. The purpose of grief counseling is to help you gain a better understanding of your loss-related experience, while working toward resolving or learning to cope better with loss related challenges.

You and your counselor will work together to develop a plan to address your particular situation. Based on their knowledge, training and understanding of your particular concerns, your counselor may make specific recommendations, suggest alternatives or possible solutions. As part of your plan you may be assigned mutually agreed upon “homework assignments,” out-of-session activities designed to help you achieve your counseling goals.

Ohio's Community Mercy Hospice Time of Remembrance

Ohio's Community Mercy Hospice will hold a **TIME OF REMEMBRANCE** service on Sunday, June 4, 2017 at 2 pm at Grace Lutheran Church located at 1801 Saint Paris Pike, Springfield, Ohio 45504. RSVPs are appreciated and can be made by calling (937) 390-9665.

Remembrance Services provide our families with an opportunity to come together during the first year of loss to remember their loved one in a non-denominational memorial service. Family members are asked to bring a single cut flower for use in the service, which will last less than an hour.

Additional 2017 Remembrance Services for Ohio's Community Hospice will be scheduled and announced in future issues of the *Bridge*.

Time of Remembrance

Ohio's Hospice of Dayton will hold a **TIME OF REMEMBRANCE** service Sunday, July 16, 2017 at 3 pm in the Ohio's Hospice of Dayton Community Room, located in the Shaw Building at 324 Wilmington Avenue, Dayton. RSVPs are appreciated and can be made by calling (937) 258-4991.

Remembrance Services provide our families with an opportunity to come together during the first year of loss to remember their loved one in a non-denominational memorial service. Family members are asked to bring a single cut flower for use in the service, which lasts less than an hour.

Additional 2017 Remembrance Services will be scheduled and announced in future issues of the *Bridge*.



Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center

Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Centers provide a variety of services to the community. Support and education are provided by a team of counselors and social workers with significant experience and expertise in supporting grieving children, adolescents, and adults.

Our philosophy is that grief is a normal reaction to loss, and that it is a unique experience for each individual, just as each relationship itself is one of a kind. The Pathways staff seeks to understand what is needed for each individual to navigate the grief process, and to assist with an effective plan to cope with this life change.

One-on-one counseling sessions for children, teens, and adults are available by appointment. Many times, just one session can provide adequate information for the griever to feel they are processing grief normally. A bereavement counselor or social worker assesses each individual's need and develops an individual plan of care.

Grief support groups can provide a much needed bridge over the difficult days, weeks and months following a loss. Participants discover that the group is a place where understanding, encouragement and practical suggestions can readily be found. Designed to meet different needs, all of our groups are open to anyone in the community who is coping with the loss of a loved one. Please contact your local Pathways of Hope office for the current schedule.

Pathways of Hope services are open to the friends and family members of all Ohio's Hospice patients, as well as the community, free of charge, thanks to support from the communities we serve. Please call the location most convenient to you for additional information or to schedule an appointment:



Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Centers

Community Care Hospice

Wilmington
937-382-5400

Ohio's Hospice of Dayton

Dayton
937-258-4991

Ohio's Community Mercy Hospice

Springfield
937-390-9665

Ohio's Hospice of Miami County

Generations of Life Center
Troy
937-573-2103

Ohio's Hospice of Butler & Warren Counties

Franklin
513-422-0300

Ohio's Community Mercy Hospice is a Service of Ohio's Hospice of Dayton

Book Reviews

Ida, Always

by Caron Levis and Charles Santoso

Book Review by Lisa Conn, MSW, LISW-S

This story is based on two polar bears who resided at the Central Park Zoo until their deaths a few years ago. As someone who visited the zoo with my nephews and met Gus while my own niece was battling cancer, I feel a special connection to this story. The book is intended for young readers, pre-schoolers-2nd grade. It tells the story of Gus and Ida, two bears who reside together at the zoo hearing the sounds of the big city just beyond as they play happily together until the day Gus learns Ida has become ill and will die. Along with Gus, the reader learns how to prepare to say good-bye and what loss feels and looks like. The zoo keeper gives Gus care and compassion which is a support through his adjustment. But nothing changes the fact that life is different without Ida and she must be grieved before he can reach his new normal.

The real Gus was a source of comfort to my sister-in-law as she prepared to say good-bye to her daughter. She would visit Gus frequently, identifying with his constant pacing back and forth. She spoke of him so much that it prompted me to buy her a stuffed polar bear to lift her spirits. Gus was a character in our lives at a time when we needed to be comforted by his cuteness.

14 Days: A Mother, a Daughter, a Two Week Goodbye

by Lisa Goich

From the first glimpse of the cover where readers are greeted by an image of mother and daughter in the midst of a fist bump (an act that can be a symbol of great respect) to the closing pages, this book is about a memorable, but short, journey of 14 days. This journey may not be exactly what readers have shared in their personal experience, but it certainly will be recognizable as a passage for those who have had to say goodbye to a parent...or two. This journey begins with a trip home and, not unpredictably, it ends with a trip "home." Between those two events, the goodbye is imminent, and even though readers know what will happen, they might find themselves trying to slow the inevitable by reading and perhaps rereading excerpts of humorous moments, revelations, and treasured memories. Finally, the end comes just as promised. 14 Days is a loving tribute to mothers and to the goodbyes in which adult children must participate, whether ready or not.

Community Care Hospice Slates Memorial Service

You and your family are invited to attend the Community Care Hospice Memorial Service on Sunday, May 7, 2017. The service will begin at 2:00 pm at the Wilmington Church of God, 100 E. Gordon Drive, Wilmington, OH.

The Memorial Service is a program of reflection, prayer and remembrance of the special people served by Community Care Hospice over the last year. This is an opportunity for family and friends to remember and honor their loved one. The service will include a picture slide show of the patients served. You are invited to mail or email a photo of you loved one to be included in the program. Please submit your photograph to michellekessler@communitycarehospice.com along with your RSVP by Wednesday, May 3. Or call Michelle to RSVP at 937-382-5400.

Memorial Butterfly Release

Generations of Life Bereavement Center, a service of Ohio's Hospice of Miami County, will be holding their Annual Butterfly Release Memorial Service as a way to remember and honor special people who have touched our lives, and who live on in our memories. At the conclusion of the service, participants release live butterflies in memory of loved ones. We invite you, your family and friends to join us on Sunday, July 30, 2017 at 3:00 pm or 7:00 pm at the Troy-Hayner Cultural Center located at 301 West Main Street in Troy, Ohio. Light refreshments will be offered immediately following each service.

Registration is required and there is a donation of \$10.00 for each butterfly. If you are unable to attend the service, butterflies requested will be released on your behalf. Registration deadline is Friday, July 21, 2017. Please contact Ohio's Hospice of Miami County for more information by calling 937-335-5191.

"What the caterpillar calls the end of the world, the Master calls a Butterfly"

-Richard Bach

The Pathways of Hope Bereavement Counseling Professionals Team

Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling program is a well-established (2002) service provider in the Southwest region of Ohio. This knowledgeable, caring staff provides support or education when requested by an individual, family, group or community organization. All of our clinicians are licensed social workers or counselors, and are seasoned professionals in grief and bereavement work.

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Bereavement Counseling Professional



Sandwiched Between Your Own Grief and the Grief of Your Surviving Parent

It is a powerful reality to lose a parent. Many factors affect your grief process. Had your parent been slowly declining? Was it an unexpected death? Had there been a role reversal of you becoming the parent and your parent becoming the child? What was your relationship like with that parent? Was there unfinished business or unresolved issues? Have you handled loss issues in the past? How have you handled loss issues in the past? What other losses or stressful situations do you have going on in your life? Do you have an effective support system?

While you are dealing with your own grief experience, there may be another gnawing force occurring simultaneously. Your surviving parent is also experiencing his or her own grief reaction. As each relationship is different and each person is unique, your surviving parent's grief experience will be different than your own. Losing a spouse is not the same as losing a parent. It is not realistic to assume that you know exactly how your surviving parent feels. If your parents have been married for a very long time, the sense of oneness that may grow between longtime spouses may further complicate the grieving process. Your surviving parent may feel like he or she has lost a limb yet continue to feel phantom pain. There may be no memory of life without the other partner.

You have been delegated a dual role of dealing with your own grief while at the same time helping your surviving parent with his or her own grief. Each of you needs to work through the tasks of mourning, but many factors may impact this experience. These tasks do not occur in a neat and orderly sequence and it is common to move back and forth between these stages.



The first task of mourning is to accept the reality of the loss. Some denial may be protective in enabling an individual to gradually deal with a loss. However forgetfulness and/or Dementia, which can be common with an aging parent, can make the situation more difficult. At a time when you are under stress and on edge, it can be particularly trying when a surviving parent may continually forget about the death of a spouse and continually question you about the absence. It may also be disheartening if a surviving parent decides to dispose of all possessions of the deceased spouse. Sometimes surviving spouses attempt to protect themselves from dealing with the reality of the loss by ridding themselves of any reminders.

Remembering

A love story recently made the national news. The chronicle featured an 82-year-old Wisconsin widower, Bud Caldwell. There's a park bench in Fond du Lac dedicated to his wife, Betty Caldwell—a memorial that prominently displays her framed picture. During their 56 years together, Betty and Bud could often be heard singing verses from “Pennies from Heaven” and “A Daisy a Day,” two of their favorite songs. With Betty gone, these songs have been delightfully incorporated into a memorial ritual, one which helps Bud remain connected to his sweetheart even though it has been necessary to move on without her. Regardless of how much snow blankets the area, Bud makes the daily drive to the park where he ambles to the front of Betty's bench. Once there, Bud carefully places a daisy and a penny on the bench—a sentimental expression of love and remembrance—and touches Betty's photograph, pleasantly greeting his beloved wife before taking leave.



The Caldwell love story is representative of Worden's fourth task of grieving: To find an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life. A continued connection with a deceased loved one is commonly maintained through the use of memorials and rituals. Choosing a memorial, such as Bud's park bench, is one way for people to honor a deceased loved one. For Bud, the bench represents a public display where he can remember and memorialize Betty with other park visitors. A headstone at the cemetery is also a common public memorial which can provide insight into the person



who is buried there with the use of an image, quotes, or other original design features.

The ritual of coming to the bench every day with a daisy and a penny is Bud's personal ritual, something that has meaning associated specifically to his relationship with Betty. If it wasn't for the news story, others may have never realized the significance of a daisy and a penny found on the park bench; but it would nonetheless have significance to Bud. The ritual helps Bud process his grief and also represents a very personal, unique way to honor his wife.



Rituals and memorials, whether utilized by an individual or by an entire community of people, can be a valuable tool in responding to grief; they can transform grief into healing action by celebrating the life of the person who has died. Rituals and memorials allow for individualization determined by factors having to do directly with the person being remembered and/or with the person who is remembering and honoring a loved one. Possibilities for creative rituals and memorials might include:

- Creating a memorial fund for donation to a project and/or cause that was supported by the deceased
- Creating a scrapbook or memory book
- Identifying the seat at the dining table usually used by the deceased as a seat of honor and either leaving it empty or inviting guests to be seated at the “special place” at the table
- Making a quilt—or perhaps a memory teddy bear—out of the person's clothing
- Wearing an article of clothing or jewelry that belonged to the deceased continuing to celebrate the birthday of the deceased by gathering family/friends for a favorite meal of the deceased

The number of ways to honor and remember can be as varied and unique as are the people being remembered.

Article continues on page 16

The majority of familiar grief rituals originated as family, religious, and/or cultural traditions. These social traditions allow extended family, friends, or even an entire community, to mourn the death along with the primary griever(s). The rituals can be connected to very specific activities such as how the body is cared for after death, cremation versus embalming versus burial without embalming, procedures followed at the funeral/memorial service including the demonstration—or lack thereof—of emotion, the way that specific family members are required to dress after the death of certain relatives, and the list goes on. Many people experience rituals common to their specific religion or culture but may not be exposed to other memorial practices and rituals unless afforded an opportunity to attend services for people from a different culture or faith. When that happens, the unfamiliar practices may be considered awkward to someone not accustomed to them, and yet can provide insight into the values other cultures/religions embrace in the context of death.

Regardless of the manner in which a life is celebrated or memorialized, memorials and rituals are a valuable and functional component of the healing journey. One of the most valuable purposes of memorials and rituals is to help prepare the griever to move forward and create a new reality...a new “normal.” By identifying a meaningful way to honor someone through memorials and/or rituals, mourners will find a way to incorporate the memories of their loved ones into their newly created realities, which will encourage them to move forward in peace.



Grappling with Guilt

Guilt can be one of the most painful aspects of grief. Carrying guilt along with grief can be like adding boulders to the already heavy load of grief that is carried after the loss of a loved one. Grieving minds might obsessively play the “If only...” mind game – “If only I’d seen the signs of illness earlier” or “If only I had spent more time with him/her” or “If only I had insisted on seeking different treatment.” Guilt producing statements with the word “should” also may play prominently – “I should have been able to care for my loved one at home” or “I should have been with him/her when he/she died”. Running on the “if only...” or “should/shouldn’t” treadmill is exhausting and disheartening. Even more seriously, failing to deal with guilt properly may lead to a complicated or blocked grieving process.



Realizing there is a difference between ‘guilt’ and ‘regret’ may prove helpful to the griever. Nearly all individuals who are grieving suffer a certain number of regrets or wishing things could have been done differently. But ‘regrets’ are normal and do not imply one has done something wrong, only that, in hindsight one wishes they would have made different choices. Regrets usually lead to sadness and the ability of the griever to state “I did my best.”

Guilt, however, implies wrong-doing and must be addressed. ‘Talking back’ to the guilt can be very helpful. Consistently making statements to yourself such as “I did my best” and changing wording to “I wish I had spent more time with my loved one” removes the blame element and moves guilt to a more healthy regret. If you continue to struggle with guilt, it may be helpful to talk to one of the trained bereavement counselors at the Pathways of Hope. Learning to let go of guilt can be a freeing process indeed!

Camp Courageous offers Support and Education for Grieving Children/Teens



Ohio's Hospice of Miami County is extremely proud of the fact that for twenty-two years Camp Courageous has been available to grieving children and teens. Camp Courageous is offered free of charge to Miami County youngsters entering grades K-12. Camp is open to any child/teen in the community who has experienced the death of a loved one, regardless of whether Ohio's Hospice of Miami County services have been used.

Camp Courageous is a day camp where bereaved children and teens come together to share memories, create memorial items, play, sing, learn, laugh and cry. Camp is a safe place for feelings to be expressed and for campers to gain life-long tools for coping with grief.

This year's camp will be held the week of June 12-16, 2017, with campers attending from 9 am-4 pm daily. Camp Courageous is held at the Ludlow Falls Camp in Ludlow Falls, Ohio.

Please contact Pathways of Hope Grief Counseling Center in Miami County for more information by calling 937-573-2100.

A Milestone in Mending Broken Hearts

Camp Pathways, the summer camp offered through Pathways of Hope grief support services of Ohio's Hospice of Dayton, marks a major anniversary this year.



“This June will mark the 25th year for Camp Pathways,” said Jonathan Haag, camp director. “Over that time, we’ve helped more than one thousand kids in the Dayton area.”

Designed to help kids who have lost loved ones, Camp Pathways is similar to other traditional summer camps, offering outdoor activities such as swimming, a ropes course, climbing walls, arts and crafts and campfires. But Camp Pathways also offers more. It brings together children who share an experience of loss and offers them the opportunity to grieve, memorialize their loved ones and support each other. The program is led by all professional grief counselors and trained volunteers.

“A lot of bonding and cohesion among the kids goes on during the camp,” explained Haag. “They are surrounded by others who are in the same boat as they are and are feeling similar pain. What I hear most often as kids leave the camp is, ‘I don’t feel so alone anymore.’” Campers end their weekend experience with great memories, new friendships and new skills in handling the sadness and grief that comes with loss.

Camp Pathways is open to children ages 7 to 17 and will be held Friday, June 23, through Sunday, June 25, 2017 at Camp Joy Outdoor Education Center. Visit www.hospiceofdayton.org/events/pathways-hope-camp-pathways or call (937) 258-4991 for more information.



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